

Hijab: The influence of THE Islamic revivalist movement on muslim women in southernmost provinces of thailand

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Abstract

Since the 1970s, images of Iranian women wearing the chador veil and participating in the revolution have been disseminated worldwide. Even in Thailand, where Muslims are a minority, the headscarf is regarded as a symbol of the Islamic revivalist movement. The purpose of this study is to investigate the evolution of the hijab movement in Thailand's southernmost provinces. In addition to conducting interviews with participants in this movement, the author conducted relevant literature research. The relationship between the 1979 Iranian revolution and the influence of the dawah movement on the Islamic resurgence in the Deep South of Thailand is revealed by a significant finding. In the Deep South, due to piety, Islamic precepts were adopted in daily life. The hijab worn by Muslim women represents this phenomenon and the evolution of clothing throughout this period. This change in attire reflects the widespread, yet individual, desire for modesty among Muslim women and resulted in modifying rules, regulations, and social institutions to match their preferences. This study contributes substantially to the body of knowledge concerning Muslim women's attitudes toward the headscarf. The consequences of this research for policymaking and cultural decisions about the hijab in Thailand are significant. The future directions of this research will be determined by the limits of the study, which are essential for identifying additional literature gaps.

Keywords: Hijab, Islamic Resurgence, Muslim Women, Islamic Culture, Islamic in Thailand

Introduction

The January 2015 shooting incident in the office of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, in which 12 people were killed, shook the globe (Ockey, 2021). Numerous foreign leaders condemned this act as an increased assault on journalists' and cartoonists' freedom of speech and expression (Kirdnark, 2022). Pope Francis, however, argued that freedom of expression would lead to political correctness (Sahill, 2017), which could exacerbate Islamophobia in France and the surrounding European region.

In addition, the hijab has become a sign of Islamic identity and might be perceived as a threat to secular norms, causing concern in France and other countries (Bhandar, 2009). The growing Muslim population has exacerbated Islamophobia over the past several decades, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the practice of Muslim women in America and elsewhere wearing hijabs (Snodin et al., 2021). Consequently, wearing hijabs has sparked friction between Muslims and people of other religions, particularly in nations where Muslims are a religious minority (Scupin & Joll, 2020). In addition to secularism, women's rights, and national identity, the subject of hijabs has sparked debate (Abraham, 2006).

A movement that originated in the Middle East and has influenced Muslim communities worldwide since the late 1970s can be traced to the earlier Islamic Resurgence (Buaban, 2020). The 1979 Iranian Revolution was the defining moment for the hijab, as it inspired Muslims worldwide to adopt the fashion. Simultaneously, the economic aspect and the growth of oil exports in Middle Eastern nations contributed to the Islamic revival's strength (Laeheem et al., 2021). Gulf countries have significant oil sectors (Aker & Aghaei, 2019), which provide riches and power to Islam, elevating the self-perception of Muslims, who were previously perceived as poor and powerless. Muslims who experience this prosperity have never before encountered such a profound disturbance in their life. Therefore, Muslims were required to calm their minds and return to Islam (Dessouki, 1982).

Muslim women have participated and played a significant role in the Islamic Revival (Masik, Chatchawet, & Chunuan, 2022; Sohsan, 2022). The image of Iranian women wearing the chador veil and participating in the revolution spread worldwide. Women who wore veils challenged the notion of Western secular modernity that separated the secular (the public sphere) and the sacred (the private space). Nonetheless, by donning the headscarf, Muslim women during the Islamic awakening breached the public-private divide and became a crucial factor in embodying the values of modern Islam (Buranajaroenkij, 2020). The veil and hijab simultaneously reflect the Islamic identity, which is apparent in the public domain and across society, both privately and publicly.

In 1984, a demonstration at Yala Teacher Training College sparked the first debate over the hijab in Thai society. The protest was significant because it sparked a wide-ranging discussion and revealed Thai prejudice against Islam. Therefore, the hijab represents the Islamic revival movement in Thai society, a return to Islamic values and practices in their way of life (Satha-Anand, 1994; Visetsak, 1991). This study investigates the impact of the Yala hijab movement on Muslim women in southern Thailand. Specifically, it attempts to investigate the following:

The Islamic renaissance influenced the headscarf movement's growth among Muslim women in southern Thailand.

There is a call for Muslim pupils to wear a school uniform with a hijab at Thai educational institutions. The request for hijab as part of Yala Teacher Training college school uniforms was denied. It highlights the effect of global religious revivalism and the demand for the right of Muslim women in Thailand, as a minority population, to wear a head scarf to college. Also revealed was the unshaken dominant structure of the Thai state's power relations in repressing "the right to be officially recognized as an equal agency" of Muslim women, both in the public physical space and in the sentimental religious freedom of "being the proud representative of Islamic believer," which had long been dominated by men.

The college's acceptance of Muslim students in uniform must grant legitimacy to Islamic identity in state-run institutions. However, this request was denied by the college. They stated that doing so would violate the school's uniform policy and that incidents in Thailand's deep south are linked to a serious security issue. As a result of this hijab demonstration, some Muslim women are attempting to mobilize to assert their right to wear the hijab as a suitable dress code in public spaces and on formal occasions, such as graduation ceremonies, where it has never been permitted before. The passing of school uniforms for Muslim students signifies the emergence of Islamic attire in public areas. This research enables us to comprehend the causes of Islamic revivalism and sentiment in contemporary Thai society.

This study is notable since it is based on the Yala hijab campaign for public space rights among Thai women. The purpose of this study is to examine the literature on the Yala hijab movement and create an explanation for it. In the literature on the hijab movement in Thailand, it is vital to analyze the theoretical ramifications of this study. Furthermore, this work contributes to the current corpus of literature. On the other hand, this study has significant practical consequences that Thai society's stakeholders must also examine to promote peace and equality to the public.

Literature review

The hijab and Islamic revival impacted numerous areas of analysis, including the evolution of history, social and political movements for rights, self-autonomy beyond the meaning of "autonomy" in the West, and the analysis utilizing the

framework of Islamist modernity. It challenges the singularity of Western modernity and provides a diversity of modernism by asserting that Islam and modernity are identical and can coexist (Clinton, 2005). The emergence of a nation began with the West demolishing the Muslim society and Islam's decline among the populace. After World War II, numerous Muslim countries were liberated from colonial rule (McDonnell, 2010). They accepted Western development concepts. Their traditional societal ideals were disregarded, and religious leaders were devalued. Zickmund (2003) stated in his 2003 book *Constructing Political Identity: Religious Radicalism and the Discourse of the Iranian Revolution* that Khomeini's rhetoric opposed the westernization of Iran. Following Iran's rapid modernization, Shah championed the country's new values. Khomeini's Islamist identity was, however, displaced. Islamic modernity arose in opposition to Western modernity. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Samuel Huntington's idea of an inevitable Huntington (1996) between an eastern religious belief, such as Muslim, and a western religious belief, such as Christianity, regained popularity (Zickmund, 2003). According to Minhas Majeed Khan's article titled "Is a Collision between Islam and the West Inevitable?," modern arguments on the clash between Islam and Christianity assert that the West must develop a better understanding of the civilizations' profoundly differing ideals (Khan, 2016).

Currently, the Western world is shocked by the growing trend of women wearing Islamic attire in public, including in the workplace, university, and other public spaces. Hijab is a major and often controversial physical signifier of Muslim women's social identity, and they cover their heads and wear Islamic attire. It is not simply a critique of the anti-emotional I but also an act of empowerment for Muslim women. The goal is to indicate to the western voyeur that Muslim ladies are neither "backward" nor "uneducated" in a loud and unambiguous manner. Badr (2004) conducted a study in Houston, Texas, using a convenience sample of 67 women and semi-structured interviews. American Muslim women were more likely than immigrant Muslim women to regard hijab as an identity, and they believe that wearing hijab could help a more positive image of Muslims in the United States (Badr, 2004). In addition, the headscarf can sanction Muslim women's participation in hitherto male-dominated public spaces.

Even though these venues originally belonged to men, Muslim women participated and formed their public and religious spaces inside the Islamic movement. [Mahmood \(2005\)](#) established in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and The Feminist Subject* the agency of women in the Egyptian Muslim women's mosques movement. It was the first time in Egypt's history that women organized public gatherings in mosques and began teaching religion, marking a transition from men being the centre of mosques and religious instruction. The religious activities of these women in public spaces were a significant milestone. The movement of women's mosques was a component of an Islamic awakening that fostered Islamic sensibility in Egyptian culture, particularly in public places, mosques, social institutions, medical services, and social welfare for the poor. Religious expression encompassing head covering, consuming, religious media products, literature, and a variety of activities in mosques has widened the scope of religious discourse. All of these factors contributed to the Islamization of Egypt's societal environment and piety movement. Following the ideas of religious devotion (Islamic piety) and moral behavior, Islamic classes not only made religion a topic for worship but also introduced it into daily life ([Mahmood, 2005](#)).

When Turkish women became involved at the beginning of the Islamist movement in Turkey, female university students and educated women adopted the turban as a symbol of Islamic revival and Islamic political order. When there was no justice in society, wearing a turban was a sign of sisterhood and defiance of the unfair and corrupt rule of the state. In addition, these movements oppose the West and imperialism in Muslim areas. Women wearing hijab conveyed a message to other Muslim women in society who perceived a rise in the number of men in public spaces as an unchanging social norm. The Turkish women's Islamist movement was motivated by their Iranian sisters who wore the veil with pride during the Islamic Revolution against the Shah in 1979. Educated Iranian women who did not embrace conventional religious beliefs rose against the Shah by covering their heads in a show of solidarity and defiance. The habit of covering one's head with a hijab spread to women who had not previously done so because they felt obligated to demonstrate unity with the majority of society. Women in other Muslim countries adopted the hijab as a show of opposition to the West and a symbol of the Islamic awakening.

The resurrection of the veil was significant, even though the veil does not have inherent significance; rather, it emphasizes a basic Islamic dress code. The code and the veil concealed particular sections of women's bodies while allowing them to move freely in public. Under the Islamic clothing code, women feel comfortable interacting with males without fear of moral transgression and can create their Islamic credentials, thereby legitimizing women's expression in public spaces. Thus, Muslim women were not perceived to be conservative. They demanded education, professions, political rights, and equal rights in marriage. In the Islamic world, women covering their hair in public signified a return to tradition and verified the legitimacy of their culture. Leila Ahmed characterized the veil as a uniform of modernity, signifying entry into and resolve to advance (Robinson, 1996). According to Eickelman (2017), maternities are not the only route forward as they are in the West, but Islamic modernity can occur without forsaking the significance of religion in people's lives. In this regard, the hijab is a traditional emblem that reflects the contemporary modernism of Islam (Eickelman, 2017).

Sylva Frisk's work, *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*, illuminates the Malaysian setting of contemporary Muslim women (2009). The study investigated the daily religious habits of pious women in Kuala Lumpur's prosperous Malay middle class. This group of women actively contributes to Islamization by organizing and participating in public religious education programs (Frisk, 2009).

Since the hijab movement at Yala Teacher Training College, the number of studies on Muslim women who wear hijab has increased throughout Thailand. The book *Hijab and Moments of Legitimacy: Islamic Resurgence in Thai Society* by Chaiwat Satha-Anand. He indicates that this Muslim student movement seeking to wear a hijab sparked the debate on hijab and the current Islam resurgent movement in Thai culture. After the Yala hijab demonstration, most of his study's contributors are master's students from Central Thailand. The majority attempted to comprehend the increasing number of female Muslim students in Thailand who wear the hijab. These dissertations, such as Kittibhumi Visetsak's *The Process of Constructing and Maintaining Female Islamic Identity among Students in the Central Region Universities*, demonstrate the subject's significance (Visetsak, 1991).

The decade-long study of Muslim women wearing the hijab has changed from a comprehensive examination of the societal backdrop to focusing on women's subjectivity and agency. Muslim Women Youth, Faith and Modernity is the title of Pipavee Phongpin's dissertation, which examines the self-making process of Muslim women youth who self-discipline following their Islamic religious faith. It builds their authority and significant position in private and public spheres. It is also practised via western modernism, such as the internet and media technologies. Islamic emotive interpretation in the deep south, and Islamic clothing in response to its tendency. In this era, Muslim women's rights are not restricted by the requirement that they cover their heads. They can interpret Islamic clothing designs in conformity with Islamic law. According to Thanyatorn Saipanyan's dissertation, "How to be Appropriately Beautiful: Understandings and Practices of Muslim Women Activists' Dressing in the Deep South of Thailand," Muslim women's attire has evolved over the past three decades due to an Islamic resurgence in the Deep South. The dressing is not only more trendy from neighboring countries and the Middle East for women to choose their style but also depends on how they interact with other individuals in the setting of violent conflicts in the Deep South of Thailand. Following Taweeluck Pollachom's article titled "Ready" to "be visible": Wearing Hijab of Muslim Women in Three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand, this study examined the various patterns and periods of the decision to wear the hijab among Muslim women in the three southernmost provinces. In addition to being 'prepared' to be conspicuous and submissive to religious dogma, the Islamic religious sentiment is also a factor in their desire to wear the hijab. These studies expand the scholarly understanding of the hijab movement in Thailand. There is a chasm between the social, political, and actor structures that drive the development of religious atmosphere and practices in the public realm and the Islamic revival in Thailand.

There are few Hijab-related studies conducted in Thailand. Although there are several studies conducted on the hijab around the world, academics in Thailand have shown very few. Therefore, this study attempts to fill a large gap in the literature. Table 1 lists only a few of the most significant studies.

Table 1. Previous Studies on Hijab in Thailand

| Author and Year | Title | Objective | Journal |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Lateh and Mudor (2014). | Testing the Muslim students' attitude towards wearing hijab at Prince of Songkla University Pattani Campus, Thailand | The study investigated the attitude towards wearing hijab of Muslim students putting on a Hijab at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus. | International Journal of Asian Social Science |
| Pollachom (2020). | Ready" to" be visible": Wearing Hijab of Muslim women in Three Southern Border provinces of Thailand. | This article studies the decision to cover the hijab of Muslim | " Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research in Asia. |
| Etnawati et al. (2018). | The role of Malassezia sp., sebum level and transepidermal water loss (TEWL) toward the dandruff severity between hijab and non-hijab-wearing subjects | Severity between hijab and non-hijab-wearing subjects | J Med Sci |
| Chaiwat (1994). | "Hijab and moments of legitimation: Islamic resurgence in Thailand." (1994): 279-295. | Hijab and moments of legitimation | Asians' visions of authority |

Research Methodology

Numerous studies on women and religious issues rely on secondary data. This study is qualitative, employing document analysis and in-depth interviews. In addition, literature reviews and desk research were utilized to comprehend better the

historical context of the hijab movement and the evolution of the hijab movement among Muslim women in the Deep South of Thailand, especially Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. The participants were the first women at Yala Teacher Training College to wear the hijab. She was among those who fought and revived the right to practice Islam, particularly by donning the headscarf at the Training College. Other attendees witnessed the development of women wearing the hijab in this region. During four years, the researcher visited the Deep South of Thailand three times to collect interview data (2017-2020). After collecting a significant amount of data, the researcher conducted a descriptive analysis of interview data. With the descriptive analysis, it was possible to answer the study question about the Islamic revival through the hijab movement and its effect on Islamic feelings in Thailand.

Results and Discussion

This study examined the current trend of Islamic revitalization and its influence on the hijab movement among Muslim women in the southern border provinces, as well as the movement calling for the hijab to be recognized as a legitimate uniform in Thai educational institutions and other official public spaces, within the context of the Islamic Revival and Modernity of Islam. It was discovered that an increase in Islamic understanding caused the hair-covering practices of the people in the three southern border provinces to shift from traditional to religious needs. In 1961, traditional pondoks were registered as Islamic religious and general secular schools, which led to the establishment of Islamic private schools. The Dawah Movement in the extreme southern region. During the writing process for the Constitution of 1997, a public hearing was held.

1.1 The emergence of the Islamic Private school in the Deep South of Thailand since 1961

The establishment of Islamic private schools in 1961 inspired Muslim women in the southern border districts of Thailand to wear headscarves. In the past, Islamic education was limited to traditional pondoks, and women wore conventional Malay attire. Women were not compelled to cover their heads in daily life when wearing

conventional Malay attire, which was influenced by Hindu and Buddhist customs. When women learned religion at home or in Tadika schools, covering their hair was typically a part of their traditional Muslim dress. They cover their hair but differ from hijab-wearers who are compelled to cover their hair fully, leaving only the face and the palms exposed. When Islamic Private schools determined that female students would be obliged to wear school uniforms, they mandated that their hair be covered, even though the curriculum did not demand a hijab. Some female pupils removed the veil after school because it was considered a school uniform requirement but not an after-school necessity. In addition, Muslim female educators in private religious institutions donned Western dress. In 1964, a female teacher at an Islamic school stated, "Students wear head coverings. The instructors do not." (443) (Pollachom, 2015). The ladies of that time who were willing to cover their heads most of the time were called Hajji or Hajah, and they presented themselves as religious. They covered their hair with a mueduwaroh cap made of fabric purchased in Saudi Arabia (Jittima, 1986).

As a result of the establishment of Islamic Private schools, female Muslim women now have the opportunity to learn both Islamic religion and secular curricula, as well as to study in foreign religious institutions of a higher level. This group of ladies returned to their hometown to teach at private Islamic schools. It began with the fact that private Islamic schools use female Islamic lecturers. They attended schools with uniforms meant to cover the body, including hijabs, appropriately. The hijab is used to conceal the awrah, a physical component that must be covered and not be revealed for mental purity. The covering of the body's interior and exterior and the mind signified everyday observance of Islamic precepts.

Therefore, hijab-wearing awoke and was adopted in educational institutions before the rest of the community, beginning with the educated Muslims of the three southern border provinces at the time. Women who studied at prestigious colleges abroad and with religious understanding returned to teach at private Islamic schools. In schools and daily life, they enacted dress codes conforming to Islamic values. However, the hijab was still deemed strange in the three southern border provinces at the time. When villagers spotted a Muslim female teacher at a private religious school

wearing a hijab, they said, "Why are you so strict?" (Pollachom, 2015).

Bangkok and the Central region of universities were the first to adopt the hijab, followed by other regions. When Muslim women attended general education schools, universities, or off-campus locations for their education, they donned hijabs. Through Islamic teaching and learning activities, the haragoh (study groups), Islamic religion lectures, summer Islamic learning camps, training programs for religious learning, and a rural development camp in a remote Muslim community, universities raised awareness about religion and daily life.

To comply with university requirements, the following generation of schoolgirls educated in both general and religious subjects in Islamic private schools had to give off their head coverings upon graduation from high school. At the time, head coverings were not permitted as part of uniforms. Muslim college students were unfamiliar with the no-head-scarf policy. Alternatively, they did not wish to violate religious principles. Therefore, Muslim students agreed to wear uniforms that conformed to Islamic values. Muslim female students at the Yala Teacher College petitioned college administrators for permission to wear the headscarf, resulting in a conflict between college administrators and students. The schism erupted into a struggle and, subsequently, a demonstration involving Muslims in Yala Province, surrounding districts, and later in Bangkok's central sector and other provinces.

1.2 The Dawah Movement in the Three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand

The Dawah Movement had spread to the three southern border provinces, and the Islamic Revival, which had spread to many regions due to the Iranian Revolution of 1978, had received coverage in various media, specifically in important publications. In addition, there was evangelism through Muslim university clubs. When graduates of Islamic private schools entered universities, they taught Islam to other students. During religious summer camp activities, university students learned about religious knowledge and obligations through lectures. They were apprised of international news. Therefore, university students' knowledge increased.

The spread of dawah in the region enhanced the likelihood of communities and

villages adopting Islamic principles. There were radio shows about Islam and Islamic knowledge camps for children that covered every part of daily life from when they awoke to when they went to night, even the Super Bowl. This was part of Thailand's Islamic resurgence. They were expected to be disciplined and to accept religious principles in their daily lives, which included the adoption of severe Islamic practice. This is a result of their social rank and socioeconomic classes: the early users were students.

In 1984, at the global dawah event held at Sirinthron Military base in Pattani province, there were signs of the Islamic resurgence in the southern provinces. Under the influence of the Islamic revival, the hijab became a widespread practice in this region. The big trend of wearing the hijab in Southeast Asia was encouraged by the rising Dawah Movement, a burgeoning middle class in the cities, and students at universities and colleges. Later, the hijab was adopted by the majority of Muslim women. However, parents were opposed to hijabs since older generations, particularly in rural regions, saw the hijab as Arabic culture (Aljunied, 2016).

During the surge of dawah in the southernmost provinces, Muslim women began donning the headscarf. Private Islamic schools forced students to wear a uniform referred to as a "dawah uniform," which requires female students to wear a white kurung top and a plain cloth skirt of any color, depending on school policy. The highlight of the dawah uniform was a black headscarf that covered the hair and a white or black headscarf that covered all body parts from the head to the shoulders (Jittima, 1986).

1.3 The Muslim women's mobilizing for wearing hijab to the hijab protest at Yala Teacher College in 1988

Before the hijab protests at Yala Teacher College, Muslim women had negotiated with the bureaucratic system to allow them to observe Islamic beliefs and the hijab in the centre area and the three border provinces to the south. There is evidence that Muslims in Thai culture attempted to bargain with the bureaucratic system so that the headscarf may be worn. Chronology from 1978 to July 1996: The 18-Year Hijab Problem Analysis and Solution was a compilation of cases from 1978 when teachers in elementary schools and professors in higher education in Bangkok

negotiated for the right to wear the hijab in the southern border provinces. In 1985, Mr Sorayuth Sakulsana Santisat filed a petition on their behalf so that his six-year-old daughter might wear a headscarf to a primary school. It was regarded as the first instance of the hijab movement in the area (Romdon, 2011). In 1986, a Muslim female teacher who wore a headscarf to work after the yearly exam was accused of "disrupting the school's normalcy." After the incident, the school's board of directors terminated her employment. When a Muslim woman pharmacist sporting a headscarf reported for her first day of government service at Sungai Kolok Hospital, she was denied employment. She was forbidden from wearing a hijab to work by senior management. Colleagues in the bureaucracy verbally bullied her. Due to her depression, she petitioned the Minister of Public Health via a Muslim member of the House (Visetsak, 1991). A female Muslim teacher from Pattani refused to remove her head covering at work, fighting against the delay in her transfer to her former school. She fought for and asserted her rights by filing a complaint and pointing out that the government regulation did not state that she was not permitted to cover her head and that her supervisor lacked the authority to dismiss her from government service because she had not committed a serious disciplinary infraction. During her time as a student at Songkhla Nakarin University, Pattani campus, she attempted to amend the policy so that female Muslim student could cover their hair during class. Teaching at the time were Muslim teachers who supported the proposal (Pollachom, 2015).

At Yala Teacher College, there was a large movement among female Muslim students to wear the hijab. The hijab-wearing practice movement in the three southern border provinces evolved into a large-scale protest. Thus, kids from Islamic Private schools could attend colleges and universities where Muslim clubs served as mentors. In addition, Muslim consciousness, self-awareness of one's rights, the manifestation of one's identity, and the modern interpretation of religious compliance all contribute to the growing trend of female hijab-wearing. In some Muslim nations, the hijab was banned before. Muslim women observed the headscarf and Islamic dress code in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. The spread of the hijab to other Muslim nations resulted from the Islamic resurgence that followed the Iranian Revolution in the Middle East.

Panida Duera, one of seven Muslim female students, petitioned for permission to study wearing a headscarf.

She has worn a hijab since she was a toddler. Consequently, when she removed the veil due to the requirement of a school uniform, she felt shy, sinful, improperly attired, and lacking confidence.

"I graduated from Yala Kindergarten Elementary School. I wanted to study together in a secular and a religious school, so I enrolled in the Islam Foundation School for Girls for my middle school and later at Thamwittaya Foundation School. I passed an examination for the Teacher's Children at Yala Teacher College. I think I have a solid pious foundation because I always cover. I started wearing the hijab in Grade 7. I had to wear a knee-length skirt and could not cover my hair. My blouse had short sleeves. I felt shameful, improperly clothed and sinful, so I discussed it with my friends in the Muslim ethics club at the university. We thought the uniform should include a hair covering. Muslim male students were supportive. I was hopeful and started wearing the headscarf along with 2-3 fellow students. My classmates did not say anything. They were OK. Some lecturers did not raise any issues, but others warned me about wearing them. The Muslim Club sent letters to teachers. Some lecturers accused us of creating rifts. Buddhist students were prejudiced. I did not know whether they acted on their behalf or because of any initiation from anyone. They were trying to create an anti-hijab situation. I wanted to dress modestly. Later, a lecturer requested a meeting with my father, who was my guardian. The lecturer informed my guardian that I had to remove my veil and wear the same uniform as the other students. My father said that this was the right thing to do. He could not prevent his daughter from wearing a veil. According to religious teaching, he said what I was wearing was religiously appropriate and he could not forbid me from wearing the attire. He added that his daughter had not done anything wrong. Another lecturer visited me at home and requested the family not to make a big deal out of it after the hijab issue had become a political mess. The president of the Student Club planned anti-hijab-wearing activities. On the next Monday, Thai students wore checked Thai villager costumes to the college. They said they were wearing Thai national attire. They also claimed that it would be problematic if a student did not respect the uniform regulation. There were banners all over the college, declaring we had

created a rift in the college. The college was ordered to close for a week. At the same time, there was anti-hijab sentiment mobilization." (Interview, 15 May 2014)

Panida insisted on covering her hair to express her Islam-based piety and her legal rights, despite opposition from her fellow students. Students are permitted to wear hijabs at Thammasat University and Chulalongkorn University, but not in the three southern border provinces. The president of the Buddhist student body resisted the college's dress code requirements by donning a Thai costume in a gesture of serious defiance. Some courses forbade the hijab from being worn in class. Female Muslim prayer clothes were removed from the Islamic Ethics Club Room and thrown in garbage cans. Using a public address system was prohibited at the club's meetings. Teachers College's Musical Department students played musical instruments to disrupt Muslim student organization meetings. Students who wished to hide their hair staged counterprotests. The college talked with hijab-wearing students about abandoning the Islamic garment. Panida's acquaintances were reprimanded by their parents, who believed their daughters should not face college, particularly those who had earned Teachers' Children Scholarships. They desired for their children to graduate and obtain employment. Others, including Panida, insisted on wearing a headscarf, while several students refused to complete their studies. Her father stated that he could not compel Panida to remove the veil since it was a religious requirement. On the other hand, there were claims that the Muslim female students received help from a particular Shia Islam Middle Eastern nation that had recently seen a political regime transition (Romdon, 2011).

Panida determined not to leave Yala Teacher College. Her older brother suggested she retake the university entrance exam, and she picked the Faculty of Education at Khon Kaen University at his advice. In contrast to the environment at Yala Teacher College, professors and fellow students greeted her with open arms at the university. Khon Kaen was located in a province with a significantly smaller Muslim population than the three border provinces to the south. However, she was hailed by senior members of the Muslim students' society and was the first Muslim student to wear the religious dress at the university. In addition, the university invited her to "model" a female Muslim student uniform under its standards. Later, when she

had completed her studies, the institution permitted her to wear a headscarf with her graduation gown (Romdon, 2011). Panida believed that her time as a student at Khon Kaen University demonstrated that universities had diverse perspectives and attitudes toward Muslims from other places.

Thang Nam [Leading Path] is a 1986-founded newspaper. Thang Nam was a prominent forum for discussing the hijab issue and the movement. The incident was consequently recorded in the central region. Previously, Thang Nam documented the hijab conflict, including instances in which Muslim women wore hijabs for official identification cards. Nonetheless, when Muslims protested the hijab at Yala Teacher College, they utilized bureaucratic complaint channels, the political system, and members of parliament to express their concerns. Nori recalled several parliamentary representatives from the southern border provinces. Den Toh-Mina, Wan Muhammad Normattha, Aripin Uthasin, Mook Sulaiman, Jirayus Nawwaket, etc., participated in the demonstration. Muslim organizations based locally and in Bangkok joined the rally. Yala Teacher University authorized students who desired to wear headscarves to do so. The central Thai government consented to the regulations modifying the regulations and submitted to the demonstrators to amend the rules and regulations, permitting the Islamic dress code within the context of citizens' fundamental civil rights.

The government's suggestion regarding the Hijab Protests was not implemented soon following the event. Nonetheless, it was the beginning and a major driving force for the Islamic dress code movement in educational institutions and government agencies throughout the next decade. After the protest and massacre in May 1992, democracy ushered in changes and enlisted the participation of diverse members of society in drafting the 1997 Constitution. The three Muslims from the southern border provinces joined the process of creating the constitution; consequently, they proposed the option of wearing a headscarf.

1.4 Pattani province participants proposed the hijab in a public hearing session for the 1997 Constitution during the drafting process

In the 1990s, numerous countries permitted the hijab in specific circumstances.

In Singapore, for instance, hijabs are allowed in schools and government workplaces. In Indonesia and Malaysia, after the fall of Suharto, hijabs are permitted. Muslim women, including singers, actors, politicians, and social celebrities, are part of the female hijab activism movement. Since the Hijab Protest, there has been no additional disagreement in Thai society regarding the hijab (Visetsak, 1991). Subsequently, however, there was a significant push in which numerous parties declared a willingness to dress in an Islamic manner. It differed from the 1988 Hijab Protest, in which internal government agencies fought over the resolution. The Minister of Education attempted to resolve the hijab issue by providing liberal instructions to students who adhered to the Islamic dress code. Still, the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Council (SBPAC) was opposed. In addition, lawmakers involved in negotiations and lobbying with Bangkok were implicated in the separatist movement. However, the mood surrounding the drafting of the constitution in 1997 transformed the hostile environment into an open society. Politicians have a responsibility to fulfil constituent needs. Similarly, in Pattani Province, where the public hearing was held at the time, the hijab issue and the right to wear Islamic garb in educational institutions with the correct enabling rules were recognized as issues of discussion.

A Muslim woman who mobilized the public hearing working group in Pattani Province recalled being the first female Muslim student to wear a headscarf at Chiang Mai University in northern Thailand. After receiving her degree, she went to Pattani and joined the working group to assist her brother, a member of the House of Representatives. After she graduated, the 1997 Constitutional Drafting Campaign began in each province to raise issues for inclusion in the drafting. There was consensus in Pattani that the choice to wear a veil must be incorporated into the regulations. To reform the hijab policy, locals collaborated methodically with local members of the House of Representatives who served in the Cabinet. At the local level, there was a demand for action over the hijab. Local actors demanded a regulation permitting the wearing of the hijab.

“In the past, an attempt was made to adopt hair covering. The proposal was approved. It is possible that practitioners will follow the regulation after the parliamentarians approve the proposal. People who pledged to follow the regulation said let’s take a shortcut and asked

for headscarves or hijab donations. We asked people to donate headscarves. I asked friends to donate rolls of cloth in

Pattani to sew hijabs because the majority of people in the region people in the region still have economic shortcomings and high expenses. When we reached this point, we had to help them and do it because we could not mobilize the issue if only a handful of people adopted the headscarf. The school would not understand because teachers or principals do not understand the practice. If all residents adopted the same time, we could push the issue as the Muslim way of life. I have done this, but some people still did not understand. [Did you donate the ready-made headscarf to the school?] No, I distributed it to parents as a group, depending on how parents would mobilize it. Some people gave the hijabs we made to the women's group. Religious leaders and village and sub-district chiefs wanted to give to women because women cared for children. Community leaders are aware of this issue because we are working on the public hearings at that time. Women's groups knew what colour or style they wanted. Schools have different color requirements. Some [schools] required navy blue, some white. Most of the requests were for white hijabs. They were thinking about the massive number of hijabs needed for the Pattani province. Massive. So, we cut rectangle headscarf pieces and gave them to the people. They could do whatever they wanted. We already have approval, so that was the beginning of hijab-wearing" (Interview, 31 October 2014).

The hijab is one of Pattani's recommendations for the 1997 constitution's public hearing. The constitution protected residents' "... freedom to practice one's religion or ritual." Through the deliberation and meeting of the National Legislative Assembly, the Constitution Drafting Council (CDC) consisted of 99 representatives from indirect elections in 76 provinces and 23 academic community members suggested by the education system. Mr Hem Sulaiman and Mr Areepen Utarasin were the Pattani Constitution Drafting Representatives and the Assistant Minister of Education, respectively. Mr Areepen Utarasin emphasized the ramifications of having an express provision on religious freedom in the 1997 Constitution, as opposed to the prior constitutions, which required interpretation. The hijab is a religious obligation for women. However, it is not an ethnic traditional garment, as the Thai government formerly believed or had prejudices. The protest at Yala Teacher College was sparked

by false perceptions or prejudice ([Isara News Agency, 1986](#)).

The hijab fight resulted from a structural or regulatory change in the movement during the 1997 Constitution writing phase and the formation of the Wadah Group, whose members of parliament had been from the southern border region. Some individuals had worn the hijab for an extended time and had become well-known in the larger society.

Remarkably, the protest at Yala Teacher College led to the large mobilization that made possible the rule change recommended by Pattani Constitution drafters. Thailand and Malaysia share the hijab movement driven by the early wave of Islamic Revival in Malaysia. Both nations have witnessed the migration of young students and educational institutions. Therefore, it is a matter of class. In Malaysia, university students are early users of the hijab, but factory workers and rural women have not adopted it. The hijab is a moral class distinction from the choices of attires and conducts pertinent to class, status, jobs, locales, ethnicity, and social network/relationship. Muslim women face a problem of both worlds due to their rejection of the Western idea of progress and modernization of women based on Western feminism criteria. Religious piety is not retrogression but rather a reinvestigation and rediscovery of the new identity due to the expanding Islamic communities. Women express themselves in a public environment once inhabited by young males and their possible suitors ([Nagata, 2021](#)).

Thailand's southern border provinces contain instances of the Malaysian phenomenon. It is not just the interior private space that is altered, but also the societal structures to develop an Islam-friendly attitude. In Thailand, the hijab was implemented through state channels and mechanisms, political parties or politicians who expressed concern, and the movement of young people. The wearing of the hijab is the product of women's activity, particularly among those who have graduated from general education or religious school; it is not a personal choice but rather an assertion and manifestation of modern Islamic identity. Lastly, the movement campaigned for structural changes in society and the public representation of the religious environment.

Conclusion

The research on an Islamic revival movement in Thai society that focuses on altering the social structure and political actors who push this agenda into national politics is still insufficient. Further research is required to collect the facts upon which policy decisions can be based. Understanding the Islamic renaissance will expand into the study of various other topics relating to the construction of public space. In addition, a research study on the religious identity formation of Muslim men within the context of current Islamic identity is required. In contrast, the contemporary phenomenon has not witnessed the establishment of Islamic places from the top down, as was the case in the past.

In contrast, the younger generation has developed a space that reflects their historical and cultural environment and combines it with their Islamic religious identity. On the other hand, Islamic resurgence that originates in the Iran revolution and the Middle East challenges local context and so when it travels to other locations. It has not entirely altered the identity of individuals in one instance. The young Muslim generation has recently emphasized their Melayu identity; they wish to keep it to compete with other Muslim cultures due to state and certain religious leaders' fear. The Thai government is sensitive to Melayu nationalism regarding the unrest in the Deep South. In the eyes of religious leaders, exhibiting the Melayu identity of the younger generation conflicts with Islamic theology. This phenomenon requires further research in the Three Southern Provinces of Thailand and on similar issues in other regions.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The outcomes of this study have theoretical ramifications for this investigation. This study has contributed to the literature on women's rights in Thailand. In Thailand, Muslim women are a minority. However, this study has produced a justification based on interview data. This research has contributed to the corpus of information surrounding the literature on the Yala movement by highlighting a new relationship.

Furthermore, this research has contributed to the body of knowledge by extending the theory and explaining many perspectives on Muslim women's rights to the hijab in Thailand. This study employs a fascinating methodology of crucial importance to the field of study, as it further investigates the hijab among Muslim women. In this sense, this work is based on a hitherto unexplored region of the literature, and its grounded assumptions are confirmed by its results, which constitute an addition to the field.

This study has practical consequences for improving the condition of Muslim women in Thailand and permitting them to wear the hijab. This study highlighted the need for a government-level campaign for the hijab, which should be recognized as Muslim women's traditional and cultural clothing and nothing else. On the other hand, this study demonstrates that the findings of this research should be employed at the government level to design policies that do not prevent Muslim girls from wearing the hijab to school. Understanding the culture of Muslims enables widespread global acceptance of the significant ramifications of this discovery.

Future Directions

This research examined the impact of the Yala hijab movement on Muslim women in southern Thailand. The outcomes of this research are noteworthy and consistent with the study's hypotheses. However, there are several limitations to this study. This study is qualitative and covers a small sample size for its findings. To obtain empirical proof of the effects of the Yala hijab movement on Muslim women in the southern region of Thailand, however, future research must concentrate on quantitative data. The Yala hijab movement has been the focus of this research, a shortcoming of this study. Therefore, future research must examine the current status and prejudice against women and girls who wear hijabs in Thailand. Lastly, questionnaires were utilized for interviews in this study. In this regard, future studies may employ a five-point Likert scale for this research's findings.

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